

## ROLE OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Women empowerment and economic development are closely related: in one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development. Development policies and programs tend not to view women as integral to the economic development process. This is reflected in the higher investments in women's reproductive rather than their productive roles, mainly in population programs. Yet women throughout the developing world engage in economically productive work and earn incomes. They work primarily in agriculture and in the informal sector and increasingly, in formal wage employment. Their earnings, however, are generally low. Since the 1950s, development agencies have responded to the need for poor women to earn incomes by making relatively small investments in income-generating projects. Often such projects fail because they are motivated by welfare and not development concerns, offering women temporary and part-time employment in traditionally feminine skills such as knitting and sewing that have limited markets. By contrast, over the past twenty years, some nongovernmental organizations, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association in India, have been effective in improving women's economic status because they have started with the premise that women are fundamental to the process of economic development.

**KEY WORDS:** Population Programs, informal sector, development agencies, income generating projects, nongovernmental organizations.

### INTRODUCTION:

The persistent of gender inequality is most starkly brought home in the phenomenon of "missing women". Today it is estimated that 6million women are missing every year (World Bank 2011) of these, 23 percent are never born, and 10 percent are missing in early childhood, 21 percent in the reproductive years, and 38 percent above the age of 60. For each missing women, there are many more women who fail to get an education, a job, or a political responsibility that they would have obtained if they had been men. Both the relative deprivation of women, and the extent to which there have been improvements over the last twenty years, are apparent in a number of spheres. In access to education in low and moderate income countries, the enrolment rate for girls in secondary school was 34 percent in 2010, while that for boys was 41 percent. Meanwhile primary school enrolment has become nearly universal for both boys and girls. In labour market opportunities: women are less likely to work; they earn less than men for similar work, and are more likely to be in poverty even when they work.

Women spend almost twice as much time on housework, almost five times as much time on child care, and about half as much time on market work as men do. In political representation: women constituted just 19.4 percent of the members of lower and upper houses of parliaments in July 2011. In legal rights: women in many countries still lack independent rights to own land, manage property, conduct business, or even travel without their husband's consent. There is a bidirectional relationship between economic

development and women's empowerment defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituent of development - in particular health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation. In one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women can as Sen. has forcefully argued and hinder development. Empowerment can, in other words accelerate development. This paper reviews the evidence on both sides of the empowerment–development relationship. It first shows that poverty and lack of opportunity breed inequality between men and women, so that when economic development reduces poverty, the condition of women improves on two counts: first, when poverty is reduced, the condition of everyone, including women, improves, and second, gender inequality declines as poverty declines, so the condition of women improves more than that of men with development, however, is not enough to bring about complete equality between men and women.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the relation between women empowerment and the economic development.
- To examine the relation between the women empowerment and education.
- To understand the relation between the women empowerment and the poverty levels.
- To explore the major problems faced by Indian women today.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Duflo (2000) finds in households where there is a woman receiving an old-age pension compared to households where no one receives a pension, girls have better anthropometric status (weight for height and height for age). Atkin (2009) uses Mexican data to study the effect of mothers' employment in manufacturing on children's height for age. Engle (1993) provides cross-sectional data from Guatemala to show that a higher female budget share is associated with better children's nutritional status (measured by height for age, weight for age, and weight for height). Phipps and Burton (1998) use data from the 1992 Expenditure Survey in Canada and focus on married-couple households where both spouses work full time. The authors find that a higher share of wives' income is correlated with higher expenditures on child care, children's clothing, women's clothing, and food. Kennedy and Peters (1992) compare female headed with male headed households in Kenya and Malawi and find that in female headed households (typically headed by a widow, who is often the grandmother of the children in the household), a larger share of the budget is spent on food. The paper also documents better anthropometric outcomes (weight for age and height for age). For Malawi, the paper also documents smaller expenditure shares on alcohol. The econometric specification does not control for income, but interestingly female-headed households have better child anthropometric outcomes despite overall lower incomes. Thomas (1990) uses Brazilian survey data collected in 1974/75 to study gender differences in the impact of non-wage income on health and nutrition in Brazil. He finds that maternal income increases family nutrition by four to seven times more than income of men. Both total calory intake as well as protein intake is affected more by female than by male income. Child survival is highly positively related to unearned income of mothers, and the effect is 20 times larger compared to unearned income of men. Maternal income also has a larger effect on two anthropometric outcomes (weight for height and height for age). Thomas (1994) uses the relative education level of the wife compared to the husband as a proxy for bargaining power. Based on data from the United States, Brazil, and Ghana, the paper documents that the mother's education has a bigger effect on the nutritional status of girls (measured by height for age) compared to the father's education, while the opposite is true for boys. In addition, recent randomized field experiments have found that transfers to men running small businesses lead to a substantial increase in business profit a few years

later, whereas no such effect is found for women (De Mel, McKenzie, and Woodruff 2009; Fafchamps et al. 2011).

#### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

The word Women Empowerment essentially means that the women have the power to regulate the activities in day to day in the external environment as in the social, political and economic terms. Women's empowerment is the new phrase in the economic development. There are many researchers and scholars have proved that increase in women empowerment has a drastic change in the economic development. Empowering women and promoting gender equality are enshrined as global development activities within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the 2000's. Women agency and freedom are among the crucial means for enhancing to their development. In the 21st century most of the women are involved in the agriculture and home based activities as shown below

Table 1: Levels and trends in sector wise composition of women by sector and region (%) for the years 2009-2010

Year:

2009-2010	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Mining
North	70.1	6.4	2.4	20.9	0.2
Centre	76.9	5.5	8.8	8.7	0.2
North-East	67.9	4.0	9.6	18.3	0.2
East	59.4	18.7	4.0	17.4	0.6
West	72.3	5.9	1.8	19.9	0.2
South	61.4	14	5.6	18.5	0.6

Source: Authors' calculations from several rounds of NSSO unit level data.

Notes: Definition of Region: North – Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Chandigarh; Centre – Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh; East - Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal; West - Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa; South – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala; North-East – Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. Data for states created in 2000 (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand) were merged with the original states to maintain comparability over time periods. From the above table it was clear that women participation in different sectors as shown above India stands fifth in agriculture, third in manufacturing, third in construction, sixth in services and third in mining. From this we can say that the women can withstand in any sector so by making some development interventions and programs make them to be more effectively involved in many fields and make economy as developed.

#### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The Indian women have spread of their age old shackles of serfdom and male domination. She has come to her own and started scaling the ladder of social advance with proud and dignity. Women in India are now uplifted and granted equal status with the men in all of life activities including the political, social, domestic and educational. But still there is a need to motivate and encourage women to participate in the activities because women secure around of in the total population. For this, Women empowerment must need some interventions for making women to be involved in the economic development of the country. The development interventions which must focus on the real gender needs, including women's income and material assets which will lead to the increased women empowerment and decreased poverty. From this intervention the women empowerment will start and led to the extent. With the implementation of some new interventions the rate of increase in the women empowerment will raise to mark. Duflo's explanation was that there was a positive correlation between women's rights and the per capita GDP in terms

of a cost benefit calculus. From this point of view it was clear that by increase in the women empowerment the economic development may a raise.

#### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:**

Most women in the India rely more on the informal work sector for an income. If women are empowered to do more the possibility for economic growth will be at large. If the informal sector is involved into many tasks and activities then there will be more growth. It was proved that female participation in counsels, groups and businesses is seen to be an increase in efficiency. For instance how an empowered women can impact a situation monetarily this was done by fortune 500 companies, “ Those with more women’s in the category of board directors had significantly higher financial returns, including 53% higher returns on equity, 24% higher returns on the sales and 67% higher returns on the invested capital (OECD,2008).” This study shows that there was a impact of women in the overall economic benefits of the company. If this was implemented on the global scale then the women in the formal workforce can increase the economic output of a nation. There by the increase in the economic growth of the nation.

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION:** Education is most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self confidence to participate fully in the development process. It is necessary for everyone mostly to girls and women because it is an entry point to other opportunities. Investments in secondary level education yield especially more and higher dividends. At present in the 21st century there was no difference made it eh matters of education between boys and girls. Girls who have been educated can recognize the importance of health care and their children needs. Women’s literacy rates are lower when compared to men in the developing countries like India. Finally if the women are educated then the status will be improved in the economy. Thereby they can grab more number of opportunities and become stronger and powerful than earlier.

“If we educate a man an individual is educated if you educate a woman the entire family is educated.”

#### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY:**

Investing in the girl’s education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. As income poverty goes down women become more empowered. Development activities should include both build the capacity of women to do this and also ensure that they have the material support and social networks not just to overcome any restrictions but to be able to enjoy an increased ability to make choices about their own futures. Women living in the extreme poverty will not have to struggle to progress along the road of empowerment this is done through engagement in economic activities or through mobilizing against the powerful to claim their rights, for this women will have to work hard. Women in the extreme poverty firstly concentrate on the practical needs which reflect on the daily activities for survival. Hence by having women empowerment the poverty lines will be reduced.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It is concluded that from the above discussions that women empowerment plays a major role in the developing countries like India as by undertaking the education they sustain their importance in each and every category which this they are ready to solve the organizational problems too there by reduction in the poverty levels and improvement in the economic growth happens.

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